EUGENIUS;

OR,

VIRTUE IN RETIREMENT.

A

POEM.

By MARY LOCKE.

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1791.

BY MARY TOCKE

POEM

ARGUE IN REFINEMENT

OF

ENGENIUS!

ADVERTISEMENT.

IN ſubmitting the following little Poem to the peruſal of the Publick, the Writer experiences all the Fears natural to an Author, who is conſcious that it does not poſſeſs Merit enough to blunt the Shafts of Criticiſm, or engage the Attention of a World, with which a Life of Retirement has left her but little acquainted. Yet ſhe flatters herſelf the candid Part of it will read it, if not with Pleaſure, at leaſt without Contempt, when they are aſſured that the Author is young, uneducated, and inexperienced.

Steeple Aſton, Oxfordſhire,
March, 1791.

ADVERTISEMENT.

IN imitating the following little Poem of the Pertinax

EUGENIUS.

In a ſequeſter'd hamlet's calm retreat,
Where health and virtue fix their favourite ſeat,
Eugenius lives; with independence bleſt,
With no vain thoughts to agitate his breaſt.
Unknown to buſy crowds, he glides through life,
Remov'd alike from trouble, care, and ſtrife.
Lord of himſelf, averſe to pomp and ſtate,
He ſcorns to ape the follies of the great,
Nicely obſerve his patron's voice and tone,
And from the worthleſs model form his own:
Applaud the learning of a ſtupid peer,
Or feed with flattery his riſing heir.
The man of worth diſdains to ſmile at vice,
And purchaſe honors at ſo mean a price.

Let ſordid Intereſt her ſons detain,
And bind her votaries with a golden chain;
Let Faſhion ſpread her faſcinating charms,
And lure the ſplendid coxcomb to her arms;
Eugenius ſhuns with care the motley crew,
A life ſerene and virtuous to purſue.

Be mine, O Muſe, the grateful taſk to tell
What various pleaſures with Eugenius dwell.
When Spring arrives, and all her perfumes ſheds,
And o'er the earth her verdant carpet ſpreads;
Gives deeper bluſhes to the roſeate morn,
And wafts rich fragrance from each blooming thorn;
Eugenius loves its various charms to trace,
And mark its influence on the human race.
With renovated hope the farmer ſwells,
Surveys his crop, and future wealth foretells:
While ſun-burnt Labour, as the ſeaſon gay,
Welcomes in carols rude the genial day.

The Milkmaid's cheek with ruddier bluſhes glows,
Her blood with quicken'd circulation flows.
Sport calls abroad; ſee her with haſte advance,
And round the May-pole join in feſtive dance.
The village Orpheus, now uncheck'd by cold,
With nimbler fingers, and a touch more bold,
With head reclin'd, and foot that beats the ground,
Swells the full craſh of harſh diſcordant ſound.
Ev'n Age creeps out the general mirth to ſhare,
Enjoy the ſeaſon, and forget his care.
They, who to rural Nature's charms are blind,
May ſcorn theſe humble pleaſures of the mind;
To me more dear than all the gaudy ſtate,
That glitters round the manſions of the great.
Steep'd in the dew of Heav'n, the bluſhing roſe
Exhales freſh ſweets, and with new beauty glows.
The modeſt violet, which avoids the eye,
Like merit oft unheeded left to die,
Its aromatic fragrance breathing round,
Delights the ſenſe before the flow'r is found.

The philoſophic mind, the heart at eaſe,
Ev'n barrenneſs itſelf has power to pleaſe.
O'er the bleak heath Eugenius loves to ſtray,
And deep in thought purſue his devious way.
The World excluded ſeems, and Nature dead,
Such ſilence o'er th' unjoyous moors is ſpread:
Save where the forges in the diſtant vale
With ſullen ſounds the liſt'ning ear aſſail.
Around unprofitable mountains riſe,
Hiding their ſhapeleſs heads in gloomy ſkies.
The churliſh Miſanthrope here forms his cell,
And on the blaſted heath delights to dwell:
Sees it deſerted by all human kind,
A cheerleſs waſte congenial to his mind.
But thou, Eugenius, ſcornſt his ſelfiſh plan,
Thou wilt not ſhun the face of ſocial man:
But paſſing on, more pleaſing ſcenes review,
Where each contraſted object blooms anew:
The ſpreading oak with more luxuriance grows,
And ev'ry flow'r with heighten'd beauty blows.

So through tempeſtuous life the wretch long toſt,
In deep deſpondency his hopes all loſt,
Should fortune ſhine with more propitious rays,
And gild with happineſs his latter days,
On ſcenes of paſt misfortunes turns his eyes,
And from the contraſt feels new raptures riſe.

Now to avoid the ſun's meridian glare,
Let us, Eugenius, to the woods repair;
Where aged oaks irregularly ſpread,
Or the ſtraight pine lifts its aſpiring head.
There let us ſit beſide the gurgling rill,
Till ſober Contemplation has her fill.
Let not the voice of clamorous mirth intrude
To interrupt our pleaſing ſolitude:
Yet may we catch, on gentle breezes borne,
The mellow ſwell of the far diſtant horn:
May ring-doves pour their melancholy ſong,
And echoing hills the murmuring ſound prolong:

While faintly heard, far off the village bell
With awful pauſes tolls the paſſing knell;
Whence may ariſe, to minds ſedate and even,
Such holy thoughts as point the way to Heaven.

When at the cloſe of day the ſun declines,
And o'er the leſs'ning landſcape feebly ſhines,
If Philomel, ſweet bird, ſhould ſtretch her throat,
Warbling her vary'd and unrival'd note,
Eugenius gently ſteals the lane along,
Attentive llſt'ning to her plaintive ſong.
But if more ſolemn thoughts his mind engage,
He ſeeks the manſion mouldering with age.
There Plenty once unlock'd her various ſtores,
And open'd wide her hoſpitable doors:
She bade the lofty roofs with mirth reſound,
While genuine pleaſure breath'd her joys around.
The ſong no more is heard within the halls,
The wary traveller ſhuns the tott'ring walls.

Within,

Within, where once the feſtive board was ſpread,
The ſolitary thiſtle waves its head.
From airy battlements the ſchreechowls cry,
And hollow winds through ivy'd arches ſigh.
There if by night the Sceptic be ſurpris'd,
He fears the God he wantonly deſpis'd.
But why, O Man, to dang'rous doubts inclin'd?
Are ſcenes like theſe requir'd to ſtrike thy mind?
Contemplate well thy form, thy ſoul's abode,
Then own and bleſs thy Maker, and thy God.
Through him the limbs their offices perform;
Through him the blood within the veins is warm;
He gives the power to breathe, to ſpeak, to move,
And forms the heart to univerſal love.
'Tis thus Eugenius, by no doubts depreſt,
Feels true benevolence within his breaſt.
To little failings generouſly blind,
He ſooths, he pities, and relieves mankind.
No ſtern unfeeling porter guards his door,
To ſpurn the old, the wretched, and the poor.

Or if the widow in ſome lonely ſhed,
On the cold earth reclines her languid head;
While on her cheek is ſpread the hue of death,
And broken ſighs declare the parting breath;
Around her while her hapleſs infants cry,
And beg their much-lov'd parent not to die;
Eugenius hears, and pities their diſtreſs,
And thanks his God, who gave him power to bleſs.
Nor from his door the proſtitute is ſpurn'd,
Her crimes forgotten, her misfortunes mourn'd.
Start not, ye Fair, that thus a man of worth
Should raiſe the wretched victim from the earth:
True virtue ever pities thoſe that ſtray,
And lures, not frights, them from their guilty way.
Eugenius from his little ſtore can give,
And bid the hapleſs wretch repent, and live.
Such generous deeds of charitable love
Angels ſhall view with ſmiles, and heav'n approve.

How

How diff'rent the purſuits of him, who rules
O'er huntſmen, grooms, and other clam'rous fools!
Follows the chace with ſanguinary rage;
The mighty Nimrod of the preſent age.
O'er fields of corn unfeelingly he flies,
The farmer's pray'rs, and menaces defies.
Let him lament, he but laments in vain,
For who can brutal inſolence reſtrain?
So he's amus'd, no matter who's annoy'd,
What woes inflicted, or what hopes deſtroy'd.
For letter'd eaſe no ſafe retreat is found,
He forces gates, o'erleaps the garden's mound:
He tramples ev'n the churchyard's hallow'd ſod,
Pollutes with vermin's blood the ſhrine of God:
While with his ſavage crew he damns the place,
Which thus curtail'd his ſport, and clos'd the chace.
Theſe pleaſures ended, view him at his board;
There too he reigns the ſole and ſov'reign lord.
There ribaldry and blaſphemy unite,
With healths, "five fathom deep," to crown the night.

Britain, behold a Sportſman! in him ſee
One form'd to injure and diſhonor thee:
Abroad a ravager, at home a ſot,
Alive deteſted, and, ſcarce dead, forgot.
But death, Eugenius, ne'er ſhall blot thy fame;
Children, as yet unborn, ſhall liſp thy name:
While hoary Age ſhall point to thy abode,
And ſay, There liv'd the Man who ſerv'd his God;
Who did no injury, who largely gave,
Whoſe heart could pity, and whoſe hand could ſave.

Enjoy, Eugenius, then thy life ſerene,
Nor caſt a wiſh beyond thy rural ſcene.
Good, tho' not great, from vain ambition free,
Can crowded drawing-rooms have charms for thee?
The man of virtue is not there careſt;
Reſpect is paid to him who dreſſes beſt.
He who can roll in ſtate, in ſplendor ſhine,
May ſee a thouſand votaries at his ſhrine.

If he has rank, what needs a cultur'd mind;
The world aſks wealth, and not a ſoul refin'd.
The man of ſtate diſplays his pompous ſtore,
The gilded chariots crowd around his door:
The knocker's ſound the viſitors proclaim,
And poets bear him on the wings of fame.
The cringing flatt'rers make the man a God,
Shrink at his frown, and triumph at his nod:
While genuine merit, without friends or home,
Scorn'd and deſpis'd, is left in want to roam.
But in the diſtant hamlet's genial ſhade
Reſpect and homage are to virtue paid.
Peace flies the gilded domes, the ſplendid halls,
To live ſecure within the cottage walls.
There none by faſhion falſely are refin'd;
They ſpeak the genuine feelings of the mind.
Rude, but ſincere, this maxim they purſue,
To give to merit, and to vice, their due.
There in thy calm abode, Eugenius, dwell,
And know and feel the bliſs of living well.

Yet,

Yet, as no human ſtate from care is free,
Fortune may dart her poiſon'd ſhafts at thee:
But rev'rence him, by whom the ſtroke is giv'n;
Let all thy hopes and fears repoſe in heav'n:
And learn, what ev'ry thinking mind ſhould know,
"Virtue alone is happineſs below."

O ſacred Virtue, at whoſe hallow'd ſhrine
I bend, and own thy origin divine;
Let youthful beauty call thee to her aid,
Shielded by thee, charms ſhall forget to fade.
For thou canſt give new luſtre to the cheek,
And bid the eye a ſofter language ſpeak.
'Tis thine to ſmooth the wrinkled brow of age,
'Tis thine the deepeſt ſorrow to aſſuage.
The holy Pilgrim, at night's ſolemn hour,
Acknowledges thy tutelary power.
Upheld by thee, he treads the foreſt drear,
While the loud thunder burſts upon his ear.

A thou-

A thouſand meteors glance before his ſight,
And diſtant ſtreams roar on the ear of night.
'Tis horror all; trees from their roots are torn,
And dying groans upon the winds are borne.
He feels thy pow'r within his boſom warm,
He ſmiles at danger, and defies the ſtorm.
Then howl, ye winds, ye awful thunders roll,
Strike, ſtrike your terrors on the guilty ſoul:
Thy mind, Eugenius, as the Pilgrim's pure,
Triumphs in innocence, and reſts ſecure.

Deſcend, O Virtue, from thy heav'nly throne;
Impreſs my mind, and make it all thy own:
This one indulgence to thy ſuppliant give,
Let me live well, or let me ceaſe to live.
Tho' o'er the lyre a falt'ring hand I fling,
And in rude ſtrains thy praiſe attempt to ſing;
Yet wilt thou not indignantly refuſe
The willing tribute of an untaught Muſe.

For ah! to me Inſtruction ne'er diſplay'd
Her book, with Wiſdom's richeſt gems inlaid;
On which the mental eye delights to gaze,
Imbibe the radiance, and partake the blaze.
Heireſs betimes of miſery and tears,
Nipt were the bloſſoms of my earlieſt years.
As when ſome flow'r, juſt op'ning into day,
Lur'd by the vernal ſun's attractive ray,
The keen North pierces; its defenceleſs head
Shrinks, droops, and withers, on its native bed:
So when my infant eyes firſt ſaw the light,
Felicity's gay proſpects open'd bright:
But ſoon dark clouds the ſmiling ſcene o'ercaſt,
Too ſoon aroſe Misfortune's chilling blaſt.
But youthful ſtill, and to a ſoil more kind
Remov'd, and ſhelter'd from each ruder wind,
From the rich garden I may ſtrength derive;
'Midſt vigorous plants, I too may hope to thrive;
Tended and nurtur'd by aſſiduous care,
In time, perchance, may bloſſom full and fair;

And rearing without fear my head on high,
Ripen beneath a warm and genial ſky.

But ye, who feel no more the glow of health,
The calm of eaſe, or luxuries of wealth;
Why ſhould you thence unceaſing woe derive,
Dead to all joy, to every pain alive?
Why murmur at the juſt decrees of Heav'n?
Why think its favours ~~are~~ are partially given?
You cannot ſee the ſecrets of the ſoul,
Where guilt and pain in dark ſucceſſion roll.
Often the beggar has a heart more bleſt
Than the gay peer, whoſe face in ſmiles is dreſt.
Behold the wretch from whom all hope is flown;
Lament his ſorrows, and forget thy own.
Or to Arabia's deſerts turn thy eyes,
See where the trav'ller in the whirlwind dies;
Or to the wand'ring robbers falls a prey,
Eſcap'd from beaſts, leſs ſavage far than they.

See Africa's dark ſons in galling chains;
From broken ſlumbers rous'd to daily pains.
Beneath the laſh the wretched victims bleed;
Heav'n turns diſdainful from the brutal deed.
Untaught by art, bold, generous, and free,
They knew, they felt the ſweets of liberty.
Man, tyrant man, uſurps what nature gave,
Tramples on rights, and makes the king a ſlave.
Now from his heart unpity'd burſt the ſighs,
And tears unheeded trickle from his eyes.
On his hard fate hope ſheds no cheering rays,
While buſy memory dwells on former days.
He thinks on joys his hut could once afford,
His ſmiling children, and his plenteous board.
'Tis for their fate he feels unceaſing pain,
Feels indignation throb in ev'ry vein.
Spring ſhall with renovated charms appear,
And yellow Autumn crown the fertile year:
But him no change of ſeaſon can delight,
Whoſe life is cheerleſs as a winter's night.

Now view the natives of the Northern ſhore,
For whom no harveſt yields its golden ſtore.
By them no tree, no fruits, no flow'rs, are ſeen,
No vales that flouriſh in eternal green:
No ſingle charm of nature there is found,
There ev'ry brook in frozen chains is bound.
The Sun indignant quits the barren plains,
And half the year unbroken darkneſs reigns;
Save where the ſnow-top'd mountain lifts its head,
To guide the lonely wand'rer to his ſhed.
Weary and fainting, what awaits him there?
Cold, hunger, ſickneſs, comfortleſs deſpair.

But why ſeek woe in diſtant climes alone?
'Tis found in regions happy as our own.
Explore, and ſhudder at the dungeon's gloom;
There view the captive in his living tomb.
There if one ray of light ſhould intervene,
It adds new horror to the dreadful ſcene.

He ſees the beetles cling upon the wall,
And ſwelling toads around his priſon crawl.
Well pleas'd he hears tremendous thunder roar,
In hopes its force will rend his priſon door;
And from his noiſome dungeon ſet him free,
Or cloſe by death this ſcene of miſery.

But ſince, Eugenius, in thy calm retreat
Content and happineſs have fix'd their ſeat,
Let no deſire to rove thy mind aſſail,
Be bleſt at home, and bleſs thy native vale.
Thy charity and virtues would be loſt
In the wide world, where long by fortune croſt,
Thouſands and tens of thouſands aid implore,
And ſtill return, and ſtill ſolicit more;
But o'er the precincts of thy hamlet ſpread,
Will cheer and raiſe Affliction's drooping head;
Hunger and cold of all their woes beguile,
And make the rugged face of Labour ſmile.

So when the Sun ſhines on each ſtately dome,
Each gorgeous palace of imperial Rome,
He only heightens to the gazer's eye
The glare of ſplendid pomp and pageantry:
But o'er the Vale when he his pow'r diſplays,
It feels his warm invigorating rays:
Fruits, herbs, and harveſts, ſwell, by heav'n deſign'd
To gladden, nouriſh, and enrich, mankind.

THE END.